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SONGS TO
-A-H-R-

by
CALE
YOUNG
RICE





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SONGS TO A. H. R.

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BY CALE YOUNG RICE

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TO
A. H. R.

Amid what joys and sorrows, upon what lands and seas, these songs have sprung to my heart, you alone know. If they have made our homeways seem fair as the far places of earth, and the far places as fair as home, they will have done that which I most desired. Gathered here together for the first time I offer them to you again.

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SONGS TO A. H. R.

THE WORLD'S AND MINE

THE world may hear
The wind in his trees,
The lark in her skies,
The sea on his leas;
May hear Song rise
So glad in its ringing
That every star
God has seems singing.
But I have a music they never can know —
The touch and soul and heart of you — Oh!
All else that is said or sung's but a part of
you —
Be it forever so!

MATING

THE bliss of the wind in the redbud ringing!

What shall we do with the April days?
Kingcups soon will be up and swinging!
What shall we do with May's?

The cardinal flings, "They are made for mating!"

Out on the bough he flutters, a flame.
Thrush-flutes echo, "For mating's elating!
Love is its other name!"

They know! know it! but better, oh better,
Dearest, than ever a bird in Spring,
Know we to make each moment debtor
Unto love's burgeoning!

UNTOLD

COULD I, a poet,
Implant the truth of you,
Seize it and sow it
As Spring on the world,
There were no need
To fling, forsooth, of you,
Fancies that only lovers heed!
For, but unfurled,
The bloom, the sweet of you,
(As unto me they are opened oft)
Would with their beauty's breath repeat of
you
All that my heart breathes, loud or soft!

FIDES PERENNIS AMORIS

THO God should send me,
When I die,
To the last star
Across His sky,
And bid all space between us be
Oblivion — one traverseless sea:

Tho He should give me,
There, a task,
Sweeter than any
I could ask,
And, with the task, achievement, too,
Greater than all I here shall do:

Yea, tho He purposed
Thus to let
Me, severed from you,

FIDES PERENNIS AMORIS

All forget;
Remembrance like a magnet still
Would draw my heart to you and will.

So I should wander
On the marge
Of that new world
With strangeness large,
Leaving my task to turn a face
Somehow toward your dwelling place.

And I should listen
Thro the stars
To silent hintings
Of lost bars
Of music that was once your voice:
In no dream should I more rejoice.

Or I should tremble
When the breeze
Brought to my cheek
Infinities

FIDES PERENNIS AMORIS

Of dim forgotten touches love
Once swept me with, like a wild dove.

Nor could the presence
Of His throng
Of noblest spirits
Hush, for long,
In me the unremembered bliss —
The vanished spell of days like this.

For in the trysting
Of true souls
There is no distance
That controls:
Nor space nor God can keep them twain —
Only annihilation's reign.

SUFFICINGS

DAY for the mind,
But night for the soul.
Sun for delight,
But moon to console.
Song for the glad,
But silence for rest.
God for the world —
But you for my breast!

WHEN THE WIND IS LOW

WHEN the wind is low, and the sea is
soft,

And the far heat-lightning plays
On the rim of the West where dark clouds
nest

On a darker bank of haze;
When I lean at the rail with you that I love
And gaze to my heart's content;
I know the heavens are there above —
But you are my firmament.

When the phosphor-stars are thrown from the
bow

And the watch climbs up the shroud;
When the dim mast dips as the vessel slips
Thro the foam that seethes aloud;

WHEN THE WIND IS LOW

I know that the years of our life are few,
And fain as a bird to flee,
That time is as brief as a drop of dew —
But you are eternity.

ROMANCE

(North Cliff, Lynton, Devon)

WHITE-CAPS hurry to meet the shore,
A hundred fathoms down.

Gray sails shimmer upon the wind
Far out from Lynmouth town.

High crags whisper above us, keen;
The heather and the ling
Laugh to the sky as driven by
The wild gulls cry or cling.

And, where the far sun like a god
Scatters the mist, lies shore.
Is it Romance's magic realm
Spring reigns thro, evermore?

ROMANCE

And that our morning hearts could see
Across the darkest foam?
Then do we know it well, my love,
Because it is our Home.

IN THE HURRICANE

WHO stood upon that schooner's driven
deck

Last night as reefed and shuddering she hove
Into the twilight and all desperate drove
From wave to angrier wave that sought her
wreck?

Who labored at her helm and watched the
wind

Stagger the sea with all his stunning might,
Until in dimness dwindling from our sight
She vanished in the rack that rode behind?

We know not, you and I, but our two souls
That followed as storm-petrels over the
waves

IN THE HURRICANE

Felt all the might of Him who sinks or saves,
And all the pity of earth's unreached goals:

Felt all — then swift returning to our love
Dwelt in its peace, uplifted safe above.

AT AMALFI

COME to the window, you who are mine,
Waken! the night is calling.
Sit by me here, with the moon's fair shine
Into your deep eyes falling.

The sea afar is a fearful gloom;
Lean from the casement, listen!
It breaks, anear, with a faery spume,
Spraying the rocks that glisten.

The little white town below lies deep
As eternity in slumber.
O, you who are mine, how a glance can reap
Beauties beyond all number!

AT AMALFI

And how, as sails that at anchor ride,
Our spirits rock together
On a love-sea — lit as this tide
With tenderest star-weather!

On a love-sea — till the dawn 's up,
Over the moon low-lying;
Till we have drunk, soul-deep, the cup
Of a delight undying!

HOW MANY WAYS

HOW many ways the Infinite has
Tonight, in earth and sky:
A falling star, a rustling leaf,
The night-wind ebbing by.
How many ways the Infinite has:
A fire-fly over the lea,
A whippoorwill in the wooded hill,
And your dear love to me.

How many ways the Infinite has:
The moon out of the East;
A cloud that waits her shepherding,
To wander silver-fleeced.
How many ways the Infinite has:
A home-light in the West,
And joy deep-glowing in your eyes,
Wherein is all my rest.

MONITIONS

SAD as an inland gull, far from the salt
 wave winging,
Lost or lured from the sea — from all its
 heart has known,
Am I, when I think that death, somewhere,
 may now be bringing
The hour, my love, to sever us, and send each
 wandering lone.

SHELTER

I HAVE been out where the winds are,
And tossing tops of trees,
And clouds that sweep from rim to rim
Of blue infinities.
And all was a sound and sway there, a surging
of unrest:
So now I am wanting silence, and the heart I
love best.

Yes, and a quiet book, too,
Of pensive poetry,
In which to let the lines lapse
Away, unlessonedly.
For I shall gather, somehow, from the soft
fire's glow,
And from the eyes I love best, all I need to
know.

SHELTER

And hours shall slip to embers,

And on the hearth lie;

And every wind that blew me,

And every want, die.

Then I shall take the hand I love best, and
turn to sleep:

And, if God wills, at dawn wake, again, to
laugh or weep.

FREE

O WERE your heart not wide, dear,
And were your soul not high,
And were not both so deep, too,
Deep as the April sky,
I should not find love freedom,
But know a need to range
All heaven and hell — a prisoner
Pining for space and change.

But since there's depth within you
To hang my moon and stars,
Since I have not to beat vain wings
Against offending bars,
I find all other spaces
That lie *beyond* our love
Are prison — all alluring worlds
Below me or above.

RECOMPENSE

NOT if I chose from a world of days
Could I find a day like this.

The sky is a wreath of azure haze

And the sea an azure bliss.

The surf runs racing the young salt wind,

Shouting without a fear

At reef and bar, at cliff and scaur,

Where you and I lie near.

O you and I who have watched the sky

And sea from many a shore!

You, love, and I, who will live and die —

And watch the sea no more!

O joy of the world! joy of love,

Joy that can say to death,

“Tho you end all with your wanton pall,

We two have had this breath! ”

STAR-WANDERINGS

LAST night I took you wandering
Down silent paths between the stars,
The sod of space beneath our feet
Was soft as violet dreams.
And close to many a moon that shone
We wandered easefully alone,
And everything to us was known,
And everything was sweet:
For all the world was as it seems
When love is made complete.

We wandered, oh, we wandered on,
Thro dimmer-shining ways, till space
In all its primal pureness lay,
A starless reach beyond.
And into it we passed to see
If God in such a void could be —

STAR-WANDERINGS

And still the soul of it was He,
As of the starry way.
Then, ah, Time touched us with his wand,
And all was yesterday.

ALL

ALL of Spring in a bird's song,
Of Summer in a rose,
Of Autumn in one fallen leaf:
So the world goes.

So forever it goes, dear,
And so within one breast
I find my all of earth-joy,
And ease for unrest.

LOVE AND INFINITY

A CROSS the kindling twilit moon
A late gull wings to rest.
The sea is murmuring underneath
Its vast eternal quest.
The coast-light flashes over the tide
A red and warning eye;
And oh, the world is very wide,
But you are nigh!

The stars come out from zone to zone,
The wind knows every one,
And blows their message to my heart
As it has ever done.
“They are all God’s,” it tells me, “all,
However huge or high.”
But ah, I could not trust its call —
Were you not by!

VIA AMOROSA

WHEN we two walk, my love, on the
path

The moon makes over the sea,
To the end of the world where sorrow hath
An end that is ecstasy,
Should we not think of the other road
Of wearying dust and stone .
Our feet would fare did each but care
To follow the way alone?

When we two slip at night to the skies
And find one star we keep
As a trysting-place to which our eyes
May lead our souls ere sleep,
Should we not pause for a little space
And think how many must sigh

VIA AMOROSA

Because they gaze over starry ways
With no heart-comrade by?

When we two then lie down to our dreams
That deepen still the delight
Of our wandering where stars and streams
Stray in immortal light,
Should we not grieve with the myriads
From East of earth to West
Who lay them down at night but to drown
A longing for some loved breast?

Ah yes, for life has a thousand gifts,
But love it is gives life.
Who walks thro his world alone e'er lifts
A soul that is sorrow-rife.
But they to whom it is given to tread
The moon-path and not sink
Can ever say the unhappiest way
Earth has is fair to the brink.

IN THE NIGHT

WHEN I lie unsleeping,
When the darkness seems
Like a lonely sepulchre
Where I'm shut in dreams,
I have but to touch you,
Reaching thro the night,
Then does all the vast tomb change
Into living light.

Then does space unbounded
Fill once more with stars,
While my worn and haunted heart
Ceases from old wars.
Then does rest come to me,
And, it may be, sleep:
Such infinitude has love —
Such watch can it keep.

LOVE-WATCH

MY love's a guardian-angel
Who camps about your heart,
Never to flee your enemy,
Nor from you turn apart.

Whatever dark may shroud you,
And hide your stars away,
With vigil sweet his wings shall beat
About you till the day.

TOGETHER

AROUND us is the sea's dance,
And the glad, swinging flight
Of wild windy gulls whose joy
Is never to alight!

Above us is the June sun,
And higher still the Blue —
And God, like a dream, dear,
The whole world through!

SWALLOWS

IN a room that we love,
Under a lamp,
Whose soft glow falls around,
We sit each night and you read to me,
Thro the silence soul-profound.
And black on the yellow frieze of the walls
The swallows fly unchanging;
Round, round, yet never round,
Ranging,— yet never ranging.

We sit and you read, your face aglow,
While amid dreams that start
I watch the swallows
As each follows
The other, swift, apart.
Till oft it seems that your words are birds,

SWALLOWS

Flying into my heart,
And singing there, and bringing there,
Love's more than artless art.

So never, in lands however far,
Or seas that wash them round,
Shall I see wings along the sky
But instantly the sound
Of your voice shall come,
And the sky, changing,
Shall be the room we love,
With its lamp-glow — and time-flow —
And happy swallows ranging.

TRANSFUSION

A SHOAL-LIGHT flashes East,
And livid lightning West,
The silvery dark night-sea between,
On which we ride at rest,
And gaze far, far away
Into the fretless skies,
World-sadness in our thought — but ah,
Content within our eyes.

The ship's bell strikes — the sound
Floats shrouded to our ears,
Then suddenly, as at a touch,
The universe appears
A Presence Infinite
That penetrates our love
And makes it one with night and sea
And all the stars above.

IN A DARK HOUR

YOU are not with me — only the moon,
The sea and the gulls' cry, out of tune;
The myriad cry of the gulls still strewn
On the sands where the tide will enter soon.

You are not with me, only the breath
Of the wind — and then the wind's death.
A shrouding silence then that saith,
“Even as wind, love vanisheth.”

You are not with me — only fear,
As old as earth's first frenzied bier
That severed two whose hearts were near,
And left one with all Life unclear.

THE OLD NEED

TONIGHT I saw the new moon, while the
 vesper bells were ringing,
A slender silver breath it seemed, swung on
 the April skies.
Soft apple blossoms under it in white throngs
 were springing,
And blossom-thoughts of you within my heart
 began to rise.

I saw the moon, I heard the bells, I felt the
 silver rapture
Of stars that soon would blossom on the pur-
 ple tree of night.
But from a Universe in bloom I only sought
 to capture
Soft-petalled words — but three — to tell
 again love's vernal might.

DOMINIONS

DEATH is as strong as the sea is,
But when I lift my eyes
To yours I know there is born there
A light to outlive the skies.
Death is as wide as the sea is,
Yet at your least love-call
I know that death's vastity is
Not all.

Death is as dark as the tide is,
But when I see you move
I know that the highmost star there
Is guided in its groove.
Death is as dread as the tide is,
But while your heart is in mine
I'll trust that all else beside is
Divine.

SECRECIES

WHAT is between my heart and the moon
To you alone I tell,
In words soft as the trembling tone
That comes from the far buoy-bell.
What is between my heart and the sea
Was never told nor writ,
Because, like this my love for you,
Its strength seems infinite.

What is between my heart and the stars
You need but ask to learn,
For all my clustered thought of you
Like them with beauty burn.
What is between my heart and the deeps
Of death could be confessed
Only when I have clasped you there
Again unto my breast.

TWILIGHT CONTENT

IS it the wind in trees or waters falling?
Is it the canyon-shadows rushing down
The ridgy slopes that seem so to be calling
My heart in twilit tenderness to drown?

Is it the canyon wren's diminuendo
That slips down a soft scale of minor peace?
Is it the spell of night's lone wide crescendo
Of mountain rest upon me — is it these?

Or but some sense of you I cannot measure?
Some memory of a wind of love that blew
Out of your heart to mine? Some darkling
 pleasure
In the first shade of grief I shared with you?

TWILIGHT CONTENT

I cannot tell. I only know how surely
In you — and the world's beauty — I rejoice.
The wren is still: gone to her nest demurely.
The night has come — yet silence is your
voice.

ON THE BEACH

THE long coast curves and the cliffs rise
up,

Red and white and green;
The surf slips in with a sucking din
Of shingle-wash between.
The light gulls float with crimson bills
Set seaward — not one cries:
And we are alone, alone with them,
Under the aimless skies.

The tide slips in, of the moon released,
Its rhythm gives us rest,
And in its pause there are hid sweet awes
That sink into the breast
With silent soothing — till the coast
Is lost in mystic gloam,
And till deep in my dreams I hear
Your voice, that calls me home.

AT THE EBB-HOUR

AS I hear, thro the midnight sighing,
The low ebb-tide withdrawn,
And gulls on the dark cliff crying
For far discernless dawn,
It seems that all life is lying
Within your every breath,
Yet I cannot believe in dying,
Or death.

As I hear, from the gray church tower,
The bell's unfailing sound
Peal forth hour after hour
To night's lone reaches round,
It seems as if Time's wan power
Would sear all things apace —
All, save in my heart one flower,
Your face.

THE EDGE OF THE HILL

IF we walked over the edge of the hill
And on, should we reach the moon?
Silver it lies in the twilit skies
Just over trees that croon
With the trembling breeze and softened pleas
Of the whippoorwill's lone cry.
If we walked over the edge of the hill
And reached the moon, would the wefts of ill
Fade there, from love, and die?

If we walked over the edge of the hill
And on, should we reach the stars?
And God at the end, our final friend
In all time's troublous wars?
And then, at last, with the world far past,
Should we be satisfied?

THE EDGE OF THE HILL

Or long again for the edge of the hill?
And love so frailly human still?
And hopes that never abide?

MINGLINGS

IT is the old, old vision —
The moonlit sea — and you.
I cannot make disseverance
Between the two.
For all the world's wide beauty
To me you seem,
All that I love in shadow
Or glow or gleam.

It is the old, old murmur,
The sea's sound and your voice.
God in his Bliss between them
Could make no choice.
For all the world's deep music
In you I hear:
Nor shall I ask death, ever,
For aught more dear.

THE HEART'S QUESTION

IS it such a little thing
To find a wind-flower
Twinkling in the wild-wood
Hour after hour,
Dancing to the wind's pipe
With a happy nod?
Is it such a little thing?
I think it is God.

Is it such a little thing
To find the young moon
Flitting thro the tree boughs
In her silver shoon,
Seeking for the wind-flower
There along the sod?
Is it such a little thing?
I think it is God.

THE HEART'S QUESTION

Is it such a little thing
To find in your face
Something of the wind-flower
And young moon's grace?
Something of the wild-wood,
Ever faery-trod?
Is it such a little thing?
I think it is God.

ASSUAGEMENT

HOW close tonight the whippoorwill
Calls, as the stars come out;
And then how like a far echo — shrill
No more, but a dream-shout.
How softly there does the Infinite
Lift up the silver moon,
And then how silently He sets
Our care-sick hearts in tune.

How soothingly does the night-wind sigh,
And ease the earth to sleep.
How fugitive is the cricket's cry,
But, oh, with life how deep.
How vastly stretches the universe,
How lone and how aloof,
Until our hands touch — then it seems
But love's star-built roof.

FIRST AND LAST

NIGHT has uttered a star,
A first faint word
Of her epic to follow.

Night has uttered a star;
It hangs in the dusk's high hollow.

Night has uttered a star;
As you, supernally dear to me,
First uttered the word that brought my heart
Starry infinity.

Night has ended her lay,
Her epic lay
Of heavenly burning.
Night has ended her lay,
And the dawn wind is returning.

Night has ended her lay;
But the starry-rhythms of your love
Thro all my being's breadth, I know,
Can never cease to move.



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